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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
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Eighteenth session
19 January-6 February 1998

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS EIGHTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Aurora JAVATE DE DIOS

Addendum

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

2. Second and third periodic reports

Indonesia

1. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3) at its 377th meeting, on 2 February 1998.

2. In introducing the reports, the representative stated that in terms of Indonesia's State ideology, the Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution, as well as the Basic Guidelines of State Policy of 1978, women's right to equality was explicitly guaranteed. However, the de facto situation is that women remain unequal to men in terms of rights and opportunities because of a combination of traditional and cultural practices and certain laws that are contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the principle of equality. The view that the man is the head of the family and the woman the manager of the household reflects this.

3. The Government of Indonesia established a national machinery in 1978, well before its ratification of the Convention in 1984. In its current form, the national machinery consists of a State Ministry for the Role of Women, which operates at both the national and provincial levels and has responsibility for

policy formulation, coordination, consultation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of the status and of the role of women in development.

4. The representative reported that in 1994 the State Ministry had established a Planning and Foreign Affairs Unit to enhance its coordinating and advocacy capacity. Its research and outreach work was being facilitated through the establishment of women's studies centres at institutions of higher learning. Also, as a first step in engendering the national development plan, the Government had developed a profile of the status and role of women in all sectors of development. The representative noted that in spite of that progress the national machinery was still underresourced, both financially and in terms of human resources.

5. As a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, the Government had launched a national movement - the Outlook of Harmonious Gender Partnership between Men and Women in the Family, Society and Development - with a view to inculcating values of equality in the citizenry. It had also translated the Platform for Action and the Convention into local languages. However, the representative reported that the particular focus of the Government was on the four core areas of poverty eradication, education, health and empowerment.

6. In the sphere of political decision-making, the representative noted that even though there were no legal barriers to women's participation, it remained low because of traditional attitudes. The Government intended to address the situation through consultation with different sectoral ministries, institutions, non-governmental organizations and political parties.

7. Indonesia did not yet have specific laws and regulations relating to trafficking in women, but it was proposing to undertake the rehabilitation of women victims. Likewise, it was also proposing to deal with the specific issues of women's human rights within the general context of human rights violations through the newly established independent National Commission on Human Rights. There was no specific framework for dealing with violence against women. Prostitution was formally banned by the Government, but since its practice through the ages had proved very difficult to eradicate, the Government of Indonesia had taken steps to localize prostitution, that is, to leave the practice only within specifically authorized areas. The Government was also making efforts to rehabilitate women involved in prostitution.

8. Indonesia was a source of considerable migrant labour for her neighbours and the Middle East. The majority of those workers were women, mostly from rural backgrounds. They tended to face problems, including violation of rights, such as torture and rape. The Government had established a computerized system to monitor the mobility of women overseas and was intensifying the pre-departure training of women.

9. The representative stated that Indonesia would be taking concrete measures to revise gender-discriminatory legislation, to ratify United Nations human rights treaties and to sensitize the courts with regard to sexual offenders. Equal rights to inheritance between women and men had been established in a Supreme Court judgement in 1960 and polygamy had been outlawed. However, the

prevalence of socio-cultural values and traditional norms reduced the impact of the legal framework.

10. The representative reported that the current economic crisis affected both women and men, although the Government had taken measures at both the central and regional levels to provide for equal access to employment for disadvantaged women, in addition to existing efforts to encourage entrepreneurship and access to resources such as land and credit.

11. Finally, the Government intended to pursue its commitment to the advancement of women on different fronts and had set itself goals and deadlines, including the reduction of the maternal mortality rate by the end of 2018 and the near eradication of illiteracy by 1999. The Government intended to enhance the status and role of women in development as it sought to achieve a just and prosperous society.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

12. The Committee noted with satisfaction the combined second and third periodic reports of Indonesia, which were frank, detailed and demonstrated a desire to move the women's agenda forward.

13. Nonetheless, the Committee expressed disappointment that change had not taken place as fast as it should have in Indonesia. Many of the problems that had been identified during consideration of the State party's initial report remained unresolved, the prevalence of gender stereotyping being a clear and disturbing example.

14. The Committee appreciated the Government's efforts to address the large number of questions posed by the pre-session working group. However, it expressed the view that the additional information provided by the delegation in the oral presentation raised a series of additional questions.

Positive aspects

15. The Committee congratulated the Government of Indonesia for ratifying the Convention without any substantive reservations. It was considered especially commendable that Indonesia, one of the largest Muslim countries in the world, had not entered the reservations to articles 2 and 16 that many other Muslim countries had. The Committee considered this to be a reflection of a serious commitment to the principles contained in the Convention and their implementation.

16. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Convention formed part of the domestic law of Indonesia and had been cited before courts in discrimination cases.

17. The Committee expressed approval of the fact that Indonesia had established a Ministry for Women in the 1970s, even before its ratification of the

Convention. The creation of women's studies centres was also considered to be a significant government achievement.

18. The Committee was pleased to note the role of women's non-governmental organizations in Indonesia, which had a history of strong and effective action.

19. The Committee congratulated the Government on the success of its family planning programme. The Committee saw this as an example of the Government's ability to take highly effective steps to improve the situation of women. However, some concern was expressed that the focus of the programme was so predominantly upon women and committee members emphasized the need also to take into account men's responsibility for family planning. The Committee expressed its hope that women were being offered a range of contraceptive choices, without the use of coercion of any sort.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

20. The Committee noted the current economic crisis in Indonesia and urged the Government not to allow it to become a justification for failing to implement the Convention. Particular care must be taken to ensure that the crisis did not have a particularly detrimental impact upon the lives of Indonesian women. The Committee emphasized that the advancement of women was one of the most pressing issues facing Indonesia and that failure to advance the women's agenda would result in underutilizing the resources of more than half of the population.

21. The Committee felt that the existence of cultural attitudes that confined women to the roles of mothers and housewives presented a great obstacle to the advancement of women. Policies and programmes developed on the basis of those stereotypes limited women's participation and entitlements, thereby impeding implementation of the Convention. The Committee expressed the view that cultural and religious values could not be allowed to undermine the universality of women's rights. It also stated the belief that culture was not a static concept and that the core values in Indonesian society were not inconsistent with the advancement of women. The Committee urged the Government to give serious consideration to the issue.

22. The Committee noted Indonesia's failure to collect data on certain issues that were crucial to the well-being of women, such as the prevalence of violence against women. Without such data, neither the Government nor the Committee could accurately monitor the situation of women's equality in Indonesia and the Committee could not offer recommendations as to what measures might be taken to combat the problem. This represented a serious impediment to the implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern

23. The Committee was very concerned at the existence of laws that were not in accordance with the terms of the Convention. Discrimination against women existed in laws regarding:

(a) Divorce;

(b) The requirement of a husband's consent in order for a wife to obtain a passport;

(c) Marriage, in particular laws permitting polygamy, and the age for marriage;

(d) Women's access to loans and credit;

(e) Women's ability to own and inherit land;

(f) The requirement of a husband's consent in order for a wife to undergo sterilization procedures;

(g) The requirement of a husband's or family's consent in order to obtain an abortion, even where the woman's life was in danger;

(h) Women's entitlement to social, health and other benefits in the labour sector.

24. The Committee also expressed concern that there was no clear definition of discrimination in national law, although this was mitigated somewhat by the fact that the Convention could be relied upon in cases of discrimination.

25. The Committee was informed that Muslims could choose whether Islamic or civil law was to be applied to them. However, the Committee was concerned as to who decided, and to what extent Muslim women were able to choose to have civil law applied to their affairs rather than Islamic law. While the Committee was pleased to note the eradication of discrimination at the de jure level in a number of areas, including inheritance, it remained concerned about how equal the situation actually was in practice and how many women benefited from the application of civil law.

26. The Committee expressed great concern about existing social and cultural norms that recognized men as the head of the family and breadwinner and confined women to the roles of mother and wife. It was unclear what steps the Government was proposing to take to modify such attitudes, which presented a serious obstacle to the advancement of women in Indonesia and were reflected in State policy and laws. Traditional gender stereotypes were also perpetuated in formal education; textbooks had not been revised to eliminate such stereotypes.

27. The Committee was concerned about women's low rates of participation in education, as well as the high level of illiteracy among women, especially in the rural sector. Education was a basic human right and while the State had made some effort to facilitate the education of poor but gifted children, the Committee was concerned about the access of all children to education.

28. The information provided demonstrated that women were still employed in lower-paid and lower-skilled work. The predominant view appeared to be that married women might provide supplemental income for a family, but there was very little emphasis on the right of women to develop a career of their own.

29. Although the Government did not provide information on the problem of violence against women in Indonesia, the Committee saw this as an area of major concern. The Committee noted that no laws existed to combat the sexual harassment or battering of women. On the basis of information provided by other sources, the Committee was particularly concerned about the situation of women in East Timor and other volatile regions. The situation of prostitutes and women who had been trafficked was also of major concern to it.

30. The Committee was concerned that the information provided on the situation of women and armed conflict reflected a limited understanding of the problem. The Government's remarks were confined to the participation of women in the armed forces and did not address the vulnerability of women to sexual exploitation in conflict situations, as well as a range of other human rights abuses affecting women in such contexts.

31. The Committee was pleased to note the information on the situation of migrant women, which had been presented in the form of a supplement to the report. However, the Committee remained concerned about reports of the death and abuse of Indonesian migrant women abroad and felt that more information could have been provided.

32. The Committee was concerned to note that limited information had been provided on the problem of HIV/AIDS. There were no data on the extent of the problem, rates of increase or any sex-disaggregated data. The Committee was particularly concerned that the problem of HIV/AIDS was being attributed to women in prostitution. Concern was also expressed about programmes designed to "clean the city streets" of prostitutes whenever there was a major international event in Jakarta. Information provided to the Committee by other sources suggested that women taken off the streets had been subjected to forced vaginal examinations.

33. The Committee raised the following questions, which should be addressed in the fourth periodic report submitted by Indonesia:

(a) With regard to the government-supported women's studies centres, who are the staff? Are they formally trained in women's studies and are they informed of the Convention's provisions?

(b) Information was provided as to the provision of child-care services and other support for women, but it remained unclear how widespread this support was. Also, how are men being socialized regarding their parental responsibilities?

(c) How has the Government responded to the deaths and abuse of Indonesian women who have migrated abroad? What assistance is provided to these women and/or their families? What government mechanisms of support <u>in situ</u> are available in cases of such emergencies involving women migrants?

(d) What is being done to address the problem of prostitution? Is prostitution officially tolerated and are any efforts being made to prevent it? What steps have been taken to re-socialize the clients of prostitutes?

(e) What is the incidence of migration-related and prostitution-related trafficking of women within Indonesia and abroad?

(f) What is the extent of the problem of violence against women, in particular against women involved in trade unions and against women in areas affected by conflict?

(g) With respect to the labour policy guidelines of 1983 and 1993, why was the qualifier "in their capacity as women and as human resources" added?

(h) Are social security benefits the same for men and women?

(i) In view of the emphasis on women in their roles as mothers and wives, what is the situation of female-headed households in Indonesia? What measures has the Government taken to assist them?

(j) What is the current rate of unemployment among women in Indonesia? How have women been affected by the present economic crisis?

(k) What efforts are made to include non-governmental organizations in policy debates and other matters related to the advancement of women?

(l) How does the Government plan to reconcile existing social and cultural attitudes with the aims of the Convention?

(m) What efforts are made to ensure the rights of minority groups to education and to preserve their cultural heritage?

Suggestions and recommendations

34. The Committee urges the Government to collect, as a matter of priority, data on the extent of the problem of violence against women in Indonesia, as well as the sources of such violence. The Committee also emphasizes the need for the gender sensitization of authorities responding to violence against women.

35. The Committee recommends that the Government give priority to hastening the pace of progress on women's issues in Indonesia. The Committee urges the Government to take stronger measures to address the contradiction that exists at present between the Government's stated commitment to the principles contained in the Convention and the actual situation facing women in Indonesia.

36. The Committee recommends that in Indonesia's fourth periodic report efforts be made to consolidate the written replies with other parts of the presentation, to avoid overlap and to enable the Committee to spend more time in dialogue with the State party. The Committee also requests that the report pay particular attention to the priority areas identified in the questions of the Committee.

37. The Committee urges the Government to take immediate steps to eradicate the practice of polygamy in Indonesia and to change the other discriminatory laws identified by the Committee.

38. The Committee noted that Indonesia is the current Chair of the G-77 meetings and urged it to take steps to incorporate a gender perspective into the meetings.

39. The Committee requests the Government of Indonesia to disseminate widely, throughout Indonesia, the present comments so that individuals are aware of the measures that have been taken to implement the Convention and the remaining steps that are required to achieve de facto equality for women.

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Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Aurora JAVATE DE DIOS

Addendum

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

4. Second, third and fourth periodic reports

Dominican Republic

1. The Committee considered the second and third, and the fourth periodic reports of the Dominican Republic (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3 and CEDAW/C/DOM/4) at its 379th and 380th meetings, on 3 February 1998.

2. In introducing the reports, the representative of the Dominican Republic noted that, since its ratification by the Government in 1982, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been an instrument for Dominican women to overcome their subordination and to change the patriarchal order.

3. Referring in particular to the fourth periodic report, the representative described it as an instrument of self-assessment and stocktaking. It provided an opportunity for assessing developments that had occurred in various governmental and societal sectors, but also for identifying obstacles and areas for further change.

4. Among progress achieved in the legal sphere, the representative noted in particular the adoption of a law against domestic violence (Ley contra la Violencia Intrafamilial). She referred to the Government's ongoing efforts to put in place practical measures to ensure compliance with the new law, such as awareness and information campaigns, training for law-enforcement officers and the creation of special units to handle violence complaints.

5. Other legal measures included the adoption of an education bill establishing the principle of equality of opportunity between the sexes, the revision of the electoral law establishing a quota of 25 per cent for women candidates in municipal and congressional elections, and the revision of the agrarian reform law. The representative also noted that there was widespread support, especially among the women's movement, for further legal reform aimed at the elimination of discriminatory provisions particularly in the Civil Code, and for the inclusion of the principle of equality in the Constitution.

6. The representative pointed to the creation of several mechanisms to ensure implementation of the legal and normative framework for women. She noted in particular the strengthening of the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer (DGPM) through a substantial increase in human and financial resources combined with a commitment in principle to elevate the Directorate to a Secretariat of State or Ministry for Women's Affairs. She also pointed to the establishment of an intersectoral committee for follow-up to, and implementation of, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

7. While there had been progress in women's political and social participation, this was an area where further progress was needed. Most notably, 31 per cent of the judges of the Supreme Court of Justice were women. There had also been an increase in women in the Foreign Service. While important changes had also taken place in the areas of education for women, especially in terms of their access to all levels of education, sexism persisted in the professional sphere.

8. The representative informed the Committee that the economic situation of the country since the early 1990s was characterized by macroeconomic control and stabilization efforts. Poverty remained the major challenge, and its eradication was a priority objective for the Government. Since poverty affected women in particular ways and limited their economic participation and access to services, specific projects for women, particularly women heads of households, formed part of the Government's poverty eradication efforts.

9. The representative concluded that the new Government, which had been installed in mid-1996, had embarked on a policy of reform and modernization. While the impact of reform on the situation of women could not yet be evaluated, she noted that the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer and the national women's movement remained committed to ensuring that a gender approach was reflected in those reforms. The Convention would provide continuing guidance into the next millennium on measures to improve the status of women.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

10. The Committee commended the Government for the preparation of a new report in late 1997, i.e., the fourth periodic report, to be considered together with its second and third periodic report submitted in 1993. It welcomed it as a well-structured report that provided frank and clear information on the situation of women in the Dominican Republic. Together with the exhaustive replies provided to the Committee's numerous questions, the presentation gave a comprehensive view of the efforts undertaken by the new Government. This was indicative of the political will of the Government to carry out its commitments under international human rights law, and especially its desire to achieve full compliance with its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

11. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Dominican Republic for its large and high-level delegation headed by the Minister for Women's Affairs, which had enabled the Committee to obtain a realistic picture of progress made and of challenges ahead in the achievement of the equal rights of women.

Positive aspects

12. The Committee welcomed the many important initiatives and measures which had been undertaken in different areas by the Dirección General de Promoción de la Mujer in a short period of time. It also commended DGPM for its ongoing work on a number of legislative drafts aimed at repealing or revising discriminatory laws and provisions.

13. The Committee noted with appreciation the adoption of several new laws and legal revisions to bring the domestic situation into greater conformity with the Convention. In particular, the Committee applauded the adoption, in 1997, of the Law on Intrafamilial Violence (see para. 4) following the country's ratification, in 1995, of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará). The Committee furthermore commended the Government on the holistic and integrated approach it was taking to address the issue of violence against women, which included legislative measures, public awareness campaigns, training and sensitization measures for law-enforcement officials and the judiciary, and the establishment of special units to handle domestic violence complaints.

14. The Committee noted with satisfaction the revision of the Agrarian Reform law giving women the right to inherit land, a reform of particular importance to rural women. Changes in the education law were commended, as was the establishment, in the electoral law, of a 25 per cent quota for women candidates in municipal and congressional elections. The Committee also noted women's above-average representation in secondary and higher education. While illiteracy continued to be a concern, the rate of female illiteracy was lower than that of males, which was an exception when compared to the situation of illiteracy in most other countries.

15. The Committee commended the Government for devoting a special section in the fourth periodic report to women heads of households, thus showing its sensitivity to the particular constraints and vulnerabilities faced by this group of women, which makes up one fourth of all Dominican households.

16. The Committee commended the role of non-governmental organizations and of the women's movement in awareness-raising and in lobbying lawmakers and the Government to focus on women's issues, and their active work in providing services to women.

17. The Committee welcomed the fact that the Government, while undergoing a period of change, reform and modernization after the last election in 1996, had made great efforts to ensure the systematic inclusion of a gender perspective in its new policies and programmes. The catalytic role of DGPM and of the women's movement in this regard were particularly noted.

18. The Committee noted with satisfaction the establishment of a governmental mechanism to follow up and implement the commitments of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

19. The Committee noted the persistence of a high poverty rate and of situations of extreme poverty, with 57 per cent of the Dominican population living below the poverty line. As women are most affected by poverty, which is aggravated by discrimination and inequality, this constituted a serious obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention in the Dominican Republic.

20. Although the Dominican Republic was a secular State, the Committee noted the absence of a clear separation of Church and State. Such a separation was being successfully practised in many countries and should be pursued in the Dominican Republic to ensure full implementation of the Convention in all areas.

Principal areas of concern

21. The Committee expressed its concern that notwithstanding legislative achievements, discriminatory provisions continued to exist, including in the Civil Code, the nationality law, and marriage and family laws, especially in areas such as the administration of marital property. Discriminatory provisions regarding unmarried women, as well as single mothers, persisted in social security provisions, and in land inheritance rights under the Agrarian Reform Law. The Committee noted with concern the continuing absence of the principle of equality from the country's Constitution.

22. The Committee expressed its deep concern about the economic consequences of women's poverty. Women's migration to urban areas and to foreign countries made them susceptible to sexual exploitation, including trafficking and sex tourism, and to prostitution. The lack of creation of jobs for women in growth sectors, including in the tourism industry, contributed to the high percentage of women migrating abroad in search of work. The Committee was concerned that notwithstanding the high level of poverty among women, and especially of women-

headed households, no affirmative action measures were being taken to support women's efforts to break the cycle of poverty.

23. The Committee expressed its concern about the rigid social codes adhered to in the country and the persistence of machismo, which was reflected in areas such as women's low participation in public life and decision-making, in the stereotypical portrayal of women's role in the family and in social life, and in a segregated labour market. Emphasizing that legal measures alone were not sufficient, the Committee noted the failure of the Government to undertake comprehensive and systematic public awareness and information campaigns to change stereotypical attitudes that were detrimental to women's equality.

24. The Committee expressed its concern that, while close ties existed between DGPM and women's groups, insufficient cooperation and networking had been established between DGPM and women in positions of power and authority in all areas of political, economic and social life.

25. The Committee was deeply concerned about the situation of women workers. While the high percentage of women employed in free-trade zones was laudable, women workers suffered considerable discrimination in income and benefits. The Committee noted with concern the absence of efforts by the Government to ensure and enforce compliance with wage, benefits and workers' safety laws, including compliance with International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions. Women's overall high unemployment rate, the particularly insecure situation of domestic workers and of single mothers were of concern to the Committee. The Committee was also concerned that women often had higher levels of education than men but were paid less than men for work of equal value.

26. The Committee expressed its deep concern about the high rate of maternal mortality which was caused, as was noted in the report, by toxaemia, haemorrhages during childbirth and clandestine abortions; the Committee also noted that toxaemia may be caused by induced abortions. The high rate of maternal mortality, in conjunction with the fact that abortions in the Dominican Republic were absolutely and under all circumstances illegal, caused very great concern to the Committee which noted in particular the implications of the situation for women's right to life.

Suggestions and recommendations

27. The Committee encourages the Government to ensure that the implementation of all provisions of the Convention proceeds without obstacles and requests the Government to include in its next report detailed information on the practical implementation of the Convention, emphasizing the impact of policies and programmes aimed at achieving women's equality.

28. The Committee urges the Government to provide DGPM with the necessary authority, and with adequate human and financial resources, to implement special programmes for women, to influence all governmental decision-making and to ensure that a gender perspective is consistently applied in all Government policies and programmes.

29. The Committee encourages DGPM, using the model of the Honorary Committee of Women Advisers to the Senate, to intensify cooperation with other sectors and entities of civil, political and economic life so as to ensure a more systematic attention to gender issues in these areas.

30. The Committee urges the Government to make women a priority in its poverty eradication strategy. Particular emphasis should be placed on the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all poverty eradication efforts, and measures should be taken to ensure to women the enjoyment of their rights in such efforts.

31. The Committee recommends that the Government continue its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in all its reforms. It also suggests that the Government identify priority areas for targeted actions for women. The reduction and elimination of illiteracy, the creation of jobs and the implementation of labour legislation and reforms were suggested for such priority attention.

32. The Committee encourages the Government to maintain the attention given to women heads of households, to conduct further research into their situation with a view to developing sound and effective policies on strengthening their socio-economic situation and the prevention of poverty and to ensure that needed services and support are provided to such households.

33. The Committee urges the Government to improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by sex so that the strong factual basis for the picture of the de facto situation of women in all areas covered by the Convention may be maintained and measures targeted more carefully to specific groups. Areas related to women's work, employment, wages and benefits, to the types and incidence of violence against women, and the impact of measures against violence against women should receive particular emphasis. Data should also be disaggregated by age, and by other criteria such as urban/rural.

34. The Committee urges the Government to continue its integrated approach to the elimination and prevention of violence against women. In particular, the collection of data and information on the incidence and types of violence against women should be improved and attention should be given to so-called crimes of passion, their frequency and the response of law enforcement.

35. The Committee strongly urges the Government to pursue bilateral agreements and to cooperate in multilateral efforts to reduce and eradicate traffic in women, to protect women migrant workers such as domestic workers from exploitation, including sexual exploitation. Such agreements should be concluded in particular with those countries that are a primary destination for Dominican women workers. Public information campaigns aimed at particularly vulnerable groups of women should also be conducted so as to alert them to potential dangers when seeking work overseas.

36. The Committee invites the Government to conduct regular assessments of the impact of the 25 per cent quota regulation contained in the electoral law so as to ensure the full implementation of the law and the achievement of higher percentages of women in decision-making.

37. The Committee urges the Government to strengthen vocational training and career counselling for young women and to increase its information activities regarding non-traditional jobs for women in order to reduce job segregation patterns and the wage gap between women and men.

38. The Committee invites the Government to strengthen educational programmes for all, girls and boys, on sexual and reproductive health, on combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and on family planning. It also invites the Government to review legislation in the area of women's reproductive and sexual health, in order to give full compliance to articles 10 and 12 of the Convention.

39. The Committee encourages the Government to give full attention to the needs of rural women and to ensure an active and participatory role for rural women in the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes that are intended to benefit them, including in such areas as access to health and social services, income-generation projects and housing. The Government should also consider the development of special banks and of improved access to credit for rural women.

40. The Committee urges the Government to continue its law reform efforts aimed at the elimination of all remaining discriminatory laws and provisions. Laws such as the Civil Code, the nationality law and labour law should be targeted for priority action to bring them into full conformity with the Convention.

41. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in the Dominican Republic of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of the Dominican Republic aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's organizations, the Committee's general recommendations, the Convention and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.